

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 5, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Colin Grotheer; Jud Aley; Emily Burnaman; Christine Bisceglie

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; Jahliah Green, Health Department; Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Phil Chiaia; Audrey Cozzarin; Shari Brennan; Wendy Bjerke; Paul Chenard; Michael Mushak; Jeremy Leung; Keegan Pepin; Carly Kramer; Redevelopment Agency

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone, Zoom, and/or the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at <http://www.norwalkct.org/meetings>.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Leung said he is a new member and has a degree in game design and has lived in Norwalk his whole life but went to college in Canada and came back and started to learn about public infrastructure around the world and how far behind Norwalk is and would like to be a part of the change to try an improve things.

Mr. Craighead said he represents the Norwalk Green Association and he has partnered with Anthony Pavia who recently started the City Hall Neighborhood Association and there are now three neighborhood associations that cover the sector of Wall Street to the west, the Norwalk Green Association is at the center and the City Hall Neighborhood Association is at the southern half of the East Norwalk corridor and their focus is improving the quality of life for everyone in this part of Norwalk, and improving walkability and pedestrian safety. He said the traffic is increasing on East Avenue, but the city is behind on instituting things that help to calm traffic and he has spoken to Mr. Travers on this issue and he had encouraged him to raise awareness on this challenge and also spoke with Councilman Heuvelman to see what can be done to try to bring people together around this challenge and he had suggested getting people to write letters and raise awareness. He said there are two main areas that are not only densely populated but that are also very heavily trafficked, and one is around the green and has been trying to have a crosswalk installed for years. He said the number of crosswalks on West Avenue compared to East Avenue is astonishing and wants to work with the city on ways to try and make it more pedestrian

friendly and safe, and there are over 100 people that have written comments on the issues that they see and said if someone would like to comment they can go onto their website and click “ I want to register my support” for this initiative to improve the quality of life and safety on East Avenue. Mr. Thompson said the most practical thing to ask for at this point is for the city to allocate the money in the 2023 budget to TMP for the study to fix the issues on East Avenue.

Ms. Cozzarin provided a synopsis from a New York Times article from last week entitled “Why Road Deaths are declining across the globe but not in the United States” and recommended the members of the commission read the article. She also said that two pedestrians were hit and killed while crossing Washington Blvd. in Stamford by a 24-year-old motorist. There was a moment of silence to honor the pedestrians that were killed and the motorist that hit them.

Mr. Mushak said that he supports the study for East Avenue but said that a road diet would be a challenge as it is a major artery but would support any kind of traffic calming and the crosswalk at the green has to happen and he supports sidewalks wherever there are signals and raised crosswalks are smart.

Mr. Mushak said that he supports the 10’ travel lanes on Highland Avenue as where just done on Hunters Lane as they really slow people down. He said that he also supports the Wall Street plan, and he thinks the plan is smart.

Mr. Chiaia said that he is a cyclist in town, and he does agree with the plan for the green area because he avoids it at all costs because it is so dangerous. He also said that the bike lanes are great on Strawberry Hill Avenue, but it ends just before the bridge. Mr. Pacelli said that area is still under construction and suggested that Mr. Chiaia put a service request in with the city’s customer service center. Mr. Grotheer noted that because there were bike lanes there prior to the construction they are required to be put back.

CHAIR’S REPORT

- Wall Street Public Meeting

Mr. Hanpeter said that bike lanes and round-a-bouts are good but the way the plan is proposed for Wall Street now doesn’t go far enough and it can be made even better for cyclists. Mr. Thompson said he agrees and provided his comments at the meeting. Mr. Hanpeter said he agrees with the round- a- bout, but he would also like to see sharrows installed where there is not enough space to install bike lanes.

Mr. Thompson said a lot of people attended the Wall Street Meeting and congratulated TMP on a well-run event and there were a lot of opportunities to see the designs.

- Highland Ave. Completion

Mr. Thompson said that a lot of crosswalks have been installed on Highland Avenue and there was a press conference held. Mr. Pacelli said that all the sidewalks have been completed, the

raised crosswalk has been installed and the RRFB's at Lenox Avenue @ Highland Avenue have been installed and there are just some minor punch list items that need to be completed and the project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget.

- NRV

- Missing Link paving underway
- March ribbon cutting, grant opening later in the spring
- HLT link section (40 Cross Street) is also close

Mr. Thompson said the paving for the Missing Link has begun. Mr. Boland said it looks great and is paved from Union Park. Mr. Hanpeter agreed and said there is an operational signal. Ms. Kramer said the paving has been completed for the Missing Link and are prepping the area at 40 Cross Street and will be paving it next week and the landscaping will be done in the spring. Mr. Thompson said there will be a ribbon cutting event held in March.

- Transportation Master Plan Open house (Tues. 12/6)

Mr. Thompson said there will be an open house for Transportation Master Plan tomorrow evening at City Hall at 6:00PM and the draft on the Transportation Master Plan will be presented.

- Seaview Ave. complete streets public meeting (Mon/. 12/12)

Mr. Thompson said there is also there will be a public meeting next week held for the complete streets for Seaview Avenue to collect input from the public and will be held at the Walk Bridge office from 5:00PM to 7:00PM. Mr. Pacelli said the parking will be validated at the Maritime Garage.

- Sustainable Streets Happy Hour

Mr. Thompson said the next sustainable streets happy hour will be held on December 14th at Eco Evolution from 5:00PM to 7:00PM and he will be following up with a special newsletter with the events details.

Mr. Thompson said the statewide elimination of fares on the buses has been extended until the end of March 2023. Mr. Hanpeter suggested sending letters of support to legislators to make the buses fare free going forward.

Mr. Thompson said he has been attending some meetings regarding a regional bike route and that it is moving forward, and Greenwich will be doing a grant application for signage and the route will essentially start as a Stamford-Greenwich bike route but the long term vision is for it to include all of the coastal cities up to Bridgeport and potentially further. He said the goal is the have dedicated bike lanes from the state line in New York to Bridgeport.

COMMISSION STRATEGY

Mr. Thompson spoke about the commissions strategy and said going forward need to define what the commission does and would like to discuss what the commission will focus on. Mr. Grotheer said in the past that discussion was held in a special meeting to discuss the strategy and vision. Mr. Thompson said he will send out some dates in early January to see what will work best for the commission. Mr. Aley suggested that the meeting be held in person if possible.

TMP REPORT

▪ NACTO Membership

Mr. Pacelli reported and said of Friday the city along with TMP had applied for a membership to the National Association of City Transportation Officials and it is a nationally recognized organization that provides guidance for roadway design and aligns with the complete streets goals. He said they are now waiting for an interview and if approved will be the third city in Connecticut to be a member.

▪ Bike Rack Order

Mr. Pacelli said an RFP was put out about six months ago for a vendor to provide bike racks but unfortunately did not get the bids they were hoping for because vendors did not want to get locked into pricing, so they are putting together a bike rack order and reaching out to vendors for quotes and are hoping to have them installed as they get them.

▪ Year End Striping

Mr. Pacelli reported on the year end striping and said and said that five miles of bike lanes have been installed and installed 10' travel lanes and a minimum of 5' bike lanes that allowed adequate vehicle to travel as well as more access for cyclists. He said the signage is the last outstanding item and that they will be installed over the winter and are working to have more bike lanes installed next year.

Mr. Hanpeter and Ms. Bisceglie said that they would like to see Main Street completely renovated to make it better to walk around at the very least. Mr. Thompson asked Mr. Pacelli if the “commercial district” on Main Street is in TMP’s long term vision. Mr. Grotheer suggested that be reported on at the next meeting after the Transportation Master Plan meeting is held. Ms. Kramer said that portion of Main Street was included in the application to WESTCOG for the safe streets plan.

COMMISSION FEEDBACK ON WALL STREET

- Purpose: Align on what unified feedback (if any) we’d like to formally give as a commission.
- Please review the concept design beforehand so we don’t have to spend lots of meeting time doing that.

Mr. Thompson said some people on the commission had provided feedback regarding Wall Street and suggested taking the feedback and aligning it with what they all agree on suggested sending a letter directly to the project feedback email address that is listed. Mr. Pacelli said that the comments are welcome and there have been two public meetings so far but to be consistent and to be transparent would

like all comments submitted thorough the webpage for the Wall Street project. He also suggested that walking as well as biking be taken into consideration. The commission discussed and compiled a list of key ideas that the commission would like to see submitted to the project team.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED CONVERTING THE LIST INTO A LETTER TO SUBMIT TO THE WALL STREET PROJECT TEAM THAT HE AND MR. GROTHEER WILL DRAFT.**

**** MR. GROTHEER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 7, 2022

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**** MR. GROTHEER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. GROTHEER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd